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S E C R E T MANAMA 000411

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR S/WCI, S/CT, AND NEA/ARP
CAIRO FOR STEVE BONDY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2029

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: GUANTANAMO AGAIN ON MFA MINSTATE'S AGENDA

Classified By: CDA Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4(b)(d).

1.(S) The Foreign Ministry is under increasing parliamentary criticism related to the status of Bahrain's Guantanamo detainees, MFA Minister of State Abdulghaffar complained on March 23 to Charge. Many Islamists, he continued, are now accusing the ministry of working with the U.S. to keep the Bahrainis in Guantanamo detention. No one in the parliament, Abdulghaffar said, believes that the MFA is talking to the USG about the detainees.

2.(S) Abdulghaffar again asked that the USG release the detainees to the GOB. Charge reiterated that the USG would consider releasing the Bahrainis if the GOB would put them in jail in Bahrain. Abdulghaffar said he could not promise indefinite detention in Bahrain because the law no longer allows it. He did say that he could administratively prevent them from ever leaving the island. Charge countered that the freedom given to known extremists in Bahrain already did not create confidence in Washington to release GTMO detainees to similar status. Abdulghaffar retreated saying he could only seek detention through the courts and requested that the USG provide evidence against the detainees that not only could be presented to the courts, but to the public as well.

3.(S) COMMENT: The MFA also gave us a diplomatic note requesting the release of the Bahrainis in GTMO. Our sense is that the angst about this is confined to the Foreign Ministry which has the responsibility of interacting with the parliament and its strong Islamist elements. The MFA can show the dipnote -- which in Bahraini eyes is a big deal -- to the parliamentarians, for example. By contrast, neither the King (strictly protect) nor the Crown Prince (strictly protect) raised GTMO detainees with General Abizaid on March 124. END COMMENT.

FORD